

Visit PAGE COUNTY

MARKETING PLAN

2022 - 2023



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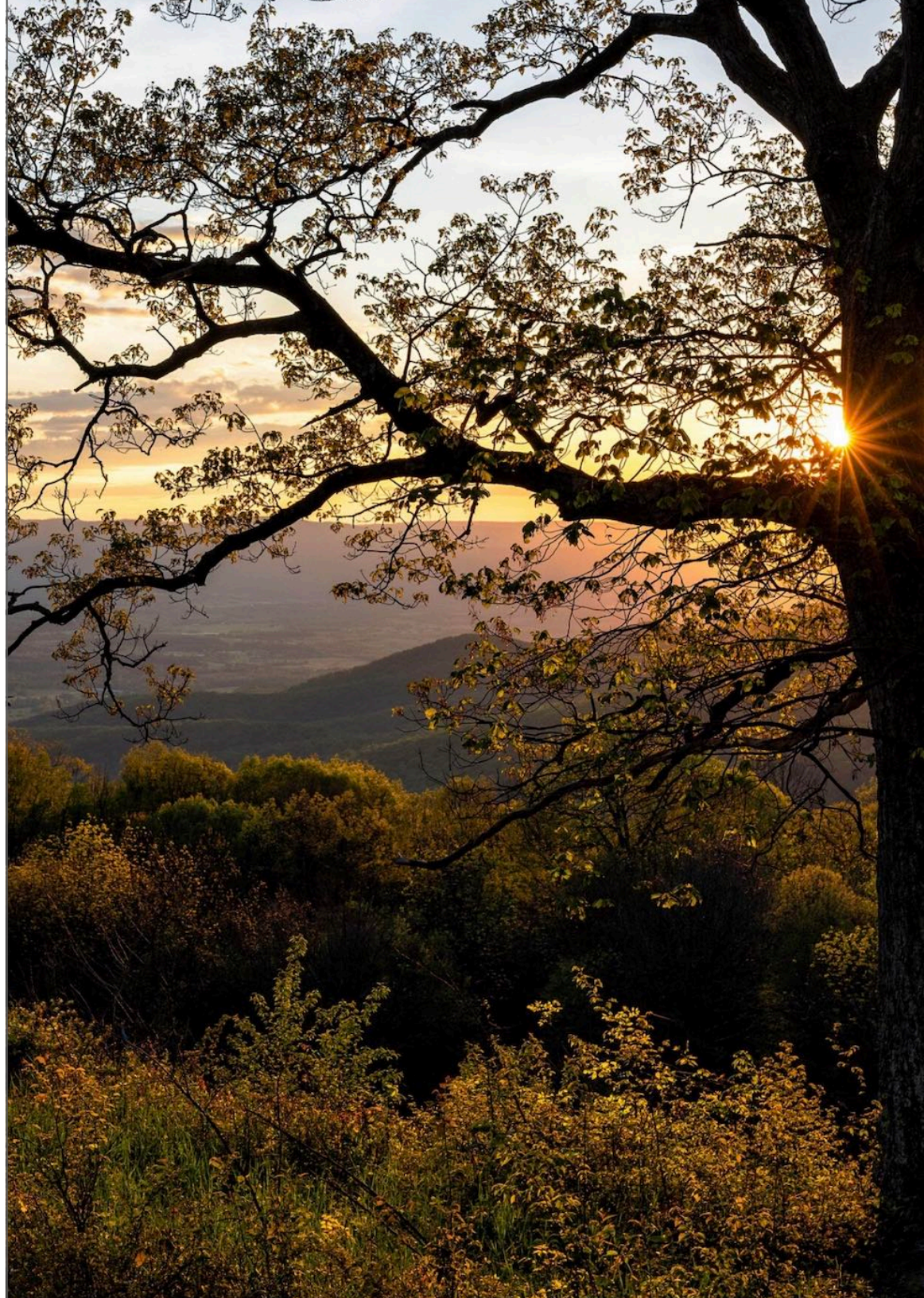
Introduction

Tourism Council

The Page County Economic Development and Tourism Department is working with the Page County Tourism Council to promote the County as a premier overnight destination. The groups' goals are strategic, balanced, sensitive and well managed to ensure an enhanced quality of life for residents and a high-quality visitor experience.

Mission

The Page County Tourism Council is charged with promoting the County as a premier travel destination by showcasing all there is to love in a Page County vacation. The money spent by visitors fuels the local economy, provides jobs for locals, improves the quality of life for current residents and increases visibility for future investors and new residents. Tourism directly contributes to the success of Page County's growth and ensures Page County is a great place to live, work and visit.



Vision

Page County will establish itself as one of Virginia's premier vacation areas, encompassing the Blue Ridge and Massanutten mountains, the Shenandoah River, Luray Caverns, farmland and, most importantly, the culture, which has developed over almost two centuries. This vision showcases the Town of Luray as a full-spectrum, world-class "historic mountain-town" destination and the Town of Shenandoah as a "river town." The Town of Stanley flourishes as a leading example of a progressive agritourism community.

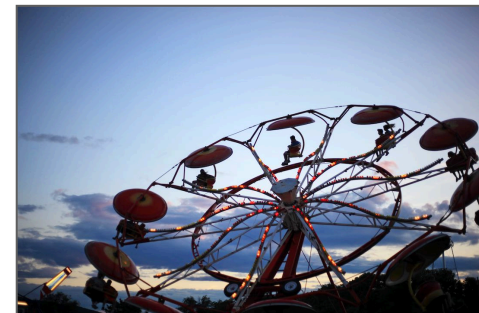
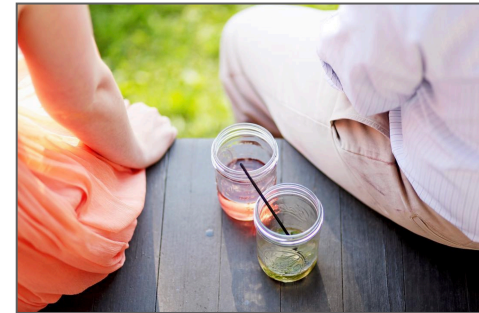
Marketing Goals

Working with the towns of Luray, Stanley and Shenandoah, tourism and hospitality partners, nonprofit groups and event planners, the County aims to grow the local tourism economy, raise awareness of tourism products, increase consumer consideration to travel to Page County and increase length of stays. Inspiring overnight visitation is the catalyst for marketing efforts in Page County. By highlighting the scenic beauty of the Shenandoah Valley, including its diverse possibilities for outdoor adventures and fresh-air exploration and relaxation, Page County aims to increase awareness and consideration of the County as a premier overnight destination for new and return trips. By conducting research to identify target audiences, including marketing initiatives designed to capture visitor data, Page County aims to ensure targeted marketing to the greatest reach.

Overview

About the Page County Tourism Council

The seven-member Page County Tourism Council is made up of industry leaders throughout Page County and in each of the County's five districts, and are contributors to the County's Transient Occupancy Tax fund. As tourism continues to grow, the Council aims to take stock to determine how to best continue a community commitment to a positive quality of life for residents, respect for sustaining a unique heritage and support for an industry poised to deliver even greater economic value and growth to the County and its three towns.



About Our Stakeholders

VISITORS

With a goal to promote Visit Page County through strategic marketing, Page County works to attract a diverse group of visitors from Virginia and beyond – including the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area as a targeted marketing area – to increase the duration of their stay, bolster the economic impact from visitor spending, enhance visitors' overall experience and inspire their intent to return for overnight getaways, weekend retreats and weeklong stays.

LODGING PARTNERS

Page County's lodging marketing efforts showcase all that the area offers. Booking Page County escape is part of the vacation experience – whether it's a river cabin; mountain cottage; RV, tent or open-air campsite; bed and breakfast; or room at a mountain lodge or historic or boutique hotel. As industry leaders, Page County supports lodging partners with sales, marketing and service opportunities.

COMMUNITY

Page County recognizes tourism as an economic leg and career pathway achieved by workforce solutions and collaborations with primary education and higher education institutions.

TOURISM BUSINESSES

Anchor attractions like Luray Caverns and Shenandoah National Park continue to bring visitors to the Valley, but a wide range of unique attractions and activities bolster Page County's drawing power, enticing visitors to stay longer and return to the area. Page County works to promote and support all industry partners: fresh-air excursions and service providers, including outdoor recreation businesses; wedding and event facilities; and larger attractions including the Caverns Country Club Resort and the Shenandoah Speedway. Page County additionally works to promote support businesses, including caterers and vendors; small retail businesses and merchants; local dining including restaurants, eateries and indoor farmers markets; and vineyards, distilleries and wine shops.

ANNUAL & SEASONAL EVENTS

Page County leverages annual and seasonal happenings, including outdoor concert and movie series, performance arts, annual town celebrations, festivals and other events, including athletic events, to inspire overnight visitation.

POLICY MAKERS

Page County's Economic Development and Tourism Department in initiatives supported by the Tourism Council serves as an industry advocate, offering policy makers and local leaders industry expertise and guidance by communicating marketing and industry needs for tourism development and sustainability.

Funding

Visit Page County marketing efforts are chiefly funded by Transient Occupancy Tax – “lodging tax” collected by county accommodations that is required by Virginia Code to promote visitation. Page County also receives in-kind services from industry partners, including hosting gatherings and programs and collaborative efforts promoting events, attractions and fresh-air adventures throughout Page County and the Shenandoah Valley.

PAGE COUNTY TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX

Fiscal year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% change over FY17
Projected	\$700,000	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	42.9%
Collected	\$1,150,605	\$857,276	\$1,013,668	\$869,855	\$1,576,150	37%
% difference	64.4%	7.2%	26.7%	(13%)	57.6%	

Source: Page County Finance Department

Situational Analysis

PAGE COUNTY'S TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Tourism is a top economic driver in Page County. In 2019, visitors spent more than \$90 million, up about 3.3 percent from 2018. On average, Page County visitors spent \$246,724 a day in 2019. That spending supported 983 jobs and generated about \$4.6 million and \$2.6 million in local and state tax receipts, respectively.

Between 2010 and 2019, visitor spending climbed each year, before falling in 2020 due to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. The tourism industry and hospitality industry statewide – particularly Virginia's food industry, lodging, attractions and small businesses – were devastated by the pandemic in 2020, with the Virginia Tourism Corp. reporting that more than \$11.2 billion in travel spending was lost in 2020, as of Dec. 5, 2020.

Statewide, visitor spending declined by nearly 40 percent in 2020, a direct result of the pandemic. In Page County, visitor spending fell by 19 percent – from about \$90 million in 2019 to about \$72.9 million in 2020, according to the most recent numbers available by the state tourism corporation.

Currently, Page County's tourism spending is rebounding, with Transient Occupancy Tax revenue projected to reach an all-time high in fiscal 2022. Between 2020 and 2021, TOT revenue rose by 81.2 percent – from \$869,855 to about \$1.6 million – due in part to the County's wide open spaces and lodging options, including more than 500 cabins.

Travel Economic Impacts, Page County

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Employment	961	947	956	983	845
Expenditures	\$79,640,572	\$81,377,930	\$87,191,459	\$90,054,304	\$72,856,044
Labor income	\$21,972,252	\$21,791,210	\$22,836,976	\$23,884,859	\$21,928,309
Local tax receipts	\$4,267,736	\$4,214,974	\$4,395,362	\$4,568,327	\$3,771,943
State tax receipts	\$2,290,330	\$2,330,872	\$2,497,909	\$2,596,628	\$2,026,857

Source: Virginia Tourism Corp.

The Economic Impact of Visitors in Virginia report is prepared annually for VTC by Tourism Economics. The report provides estimates of travel spending in Virginia and its 133 counties and independent cities as well as the employment, labor income, state and local tax revenues directly generated by these expenditures. The analysis is based on an Input-Output (I-O) model from IMPLAN for the Virginia economy. The data in this report only represents the direct impact of travel estimates for the state and the localities. These five impact categories exclude the indirect and induced impacts.

Expenditures: Impacts created directly from spending by visitors to a destination within a discreet group of tourism related sectors (e.g., recreation, transportation, lodging etc.)

Employment: Jobs directly supported by visitor activity (includes part-time and seasonal work). One job is defined as one person working at least one hour per week for fifty weeks during the calendar year.

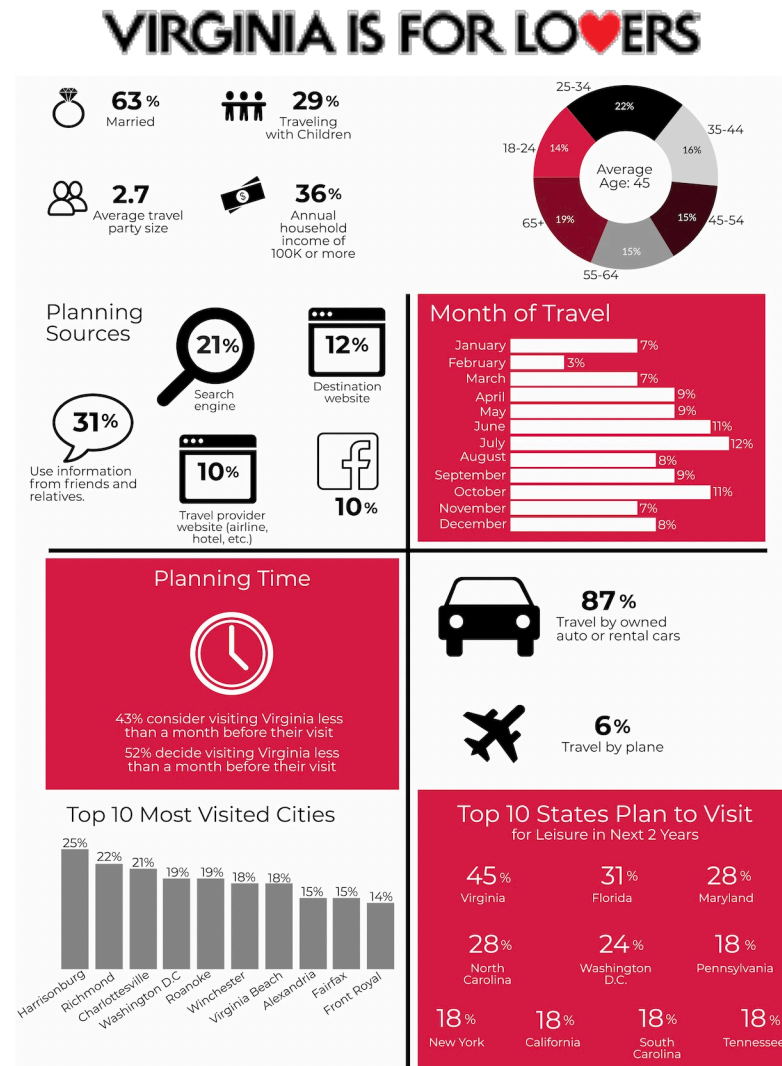
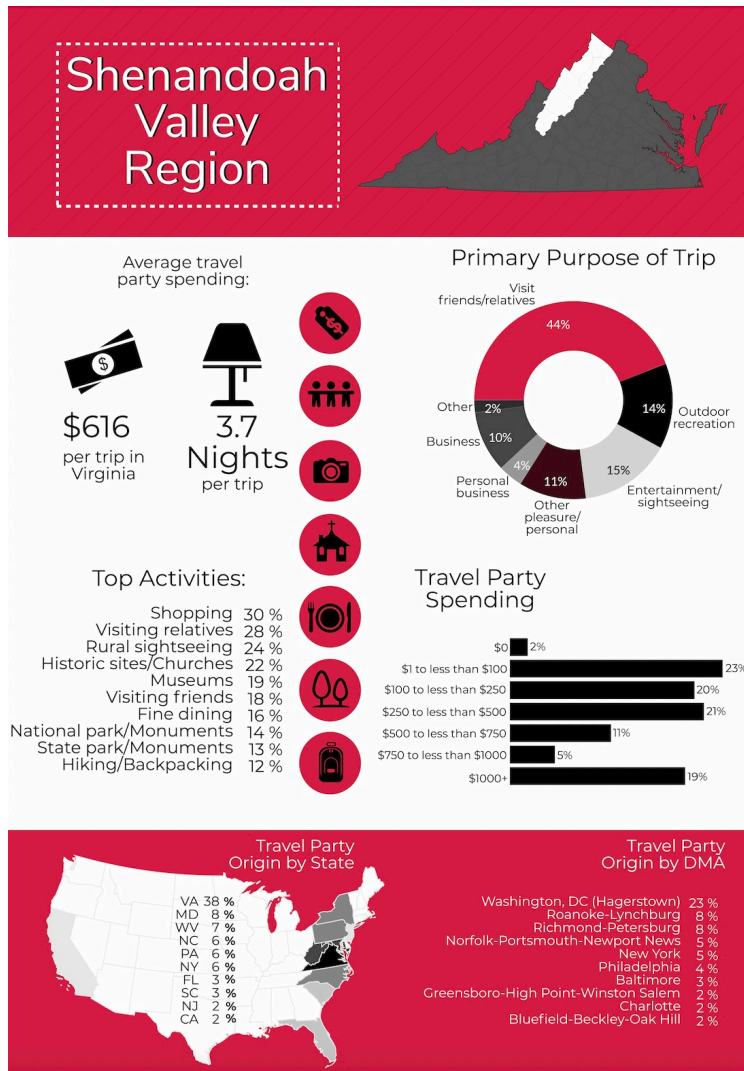
Labor Income: Income (wages, salaries, proprietor income and benefits) supported by direct visitor spending.

Local Taxes: City and County taxes generated by direct visitor spending.

State Taxes: State tax revenue generated by direct visitor spending.



Shenandoah Valley Travelers



Graphic: Virginia Tourism Corporation

Source: TNS-TravelTrakAmerica, VA Module, FY2019

Localities: The counties of Augusta, Clarke, Frederick, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah and Warren and the cities of Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, Waynesboro and Winchester.

Guiding Principles

These six strategic principals will guide Visit Page County marketing efforts and are at the core of every marketing initiative.

SUPPORT OVERNIGHT VISITATION

Page County will leverage overnight stays and unique lodging experiences as a key driver and enabler for destination growth.

SHOWCASE FRESH-AIR EXCURSIONS

Page County will promote outdoor adventures, its scenic beauty and spacious lodging properties as a catalyst for visitation, longer stays and returns.

FOCUS ON RETENTION

Page County will encourage repeat visitation by promoting “stay and play again,” “mid-week retreat” and “so much more” campaigns that will highlight all that the area has to offer.

INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY

Page County residents, business owners, industry partners and government leaders support and advocate for tourism as an economic driver.

PROMOTE THEMED EXPERIENCES

Page County will develop and expand curated experiences designed to inspire visitation and drive tourism growth.

IMPLEMENT RESEARCH-LED STRATEGY

Page County will work to research and gather analytics about Page County visitors that will inform marketing strategy and initiatives.



2022-23 Marketing Plan

The marketing plan serves as a strategic roadmap that defines marketing goals and objectives and outlines a phased tactical plan.

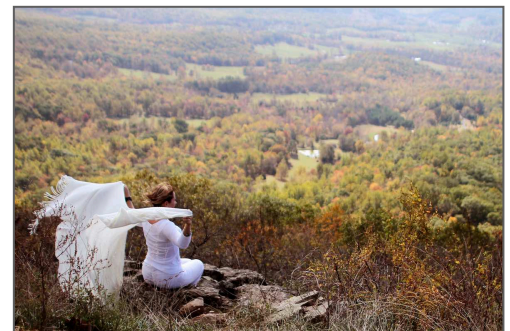
Marketing Goals

Page County's Economic Development and Tourism Department is responsible for developing and implementing an overall brand strategy and marketing plan for leisure travel. The department is focused on promoting key services and experiences that facilitate tourism growth, with a focus on increasing tourism and sales tax revenues. These efforts include the creation of a new Visit Page County website, compelling advertising, themed campaigns, promotions and digital, social media and other partner-based initiatives.

Marketing Management

Page County will work in partnership with the towns of Luray, Stanley and Shenandoah to develop a more comprehensive, all-inclusive Tourism Management Plan that will ensure the goals of balancing resident needs, preserving a rich culture and heritage and enhancing the overall visitor experience while maintaining Page County's scenic beauty.

The preliminary Tourism Management Plan is designed to be a living document serving as a strategic roadmap to guide the County and its towns and to direct residential, preservation, and tourism industry efforts for the next three to five years in managing tourism-related dynamics, challenges and opportunities.



National Marketing

Virginia Tourism Corp.
Campaign tie-ins and co-op programs

Statewide Marketing

Shenandoah Valley Travel Association and Shenandoah Valley Travel Partnership marketing cooperation

Regional Marketing

Internal marketing efforts: Page County Economic Development and Tourism Office, Page County Tourism Council

Marketing Objectives

- Develop Visit Page County branding, positioning Page as a destination of choice for leisure travel, fresh-air excursions, weddings and domestic/international tour and travel.
- Conduct research to identify target audiences, showcasing the variety that Page County has to offer in strategic marketing initiatives to the greatest reach.
- Showcase Page County and the towns of Luray, Stanley and Shenandoah through cohesive branding and initiatives that promote the area as a whole.
- Incentivize visitors to opt for overnight trips in lieu of day trips and to extend their stays and return to the area by promoting events and entertainment, outdoor recreation, attractions and four seasons of fresh-air experiences and relaxation.
- Continue and evolve marketing and vendor partnerships to generate new digital assets to support marketing efforts.
- Research and survey Page County visitors to identify demographics and develop primary campaigns and marketing efforts.
- Identify opportunities to market directly to visitors, attract new visitors and spur return visits.
- Utilize the Virginia Tourism Corporation's Drive 2.0 Shenandoah Valley Regional Plan to guide Page County marketing efforts and priorities.
- Encourage visitors to do, see and spend more by leveraging video, photography and social media marketing, online packaging and the creation of print materials and guides for distribution to local lodging and industry partners and areas with high visitor traffic.
- Leverage industry partnerships with regional organizations and initiatives including the Shenandoah Valley Travel Association, the Shenandoah Valley Travel Partnership, Fields of Gold and the Virginia Tourism Corporation in continued branding, research and marketing efforts.
- Develop and promote VisitPageCounty.com, maximizing engagement through search engine optimization and marketing, content development and personalization.
- Leverage statewide funding programs to expand and evolve marketing efforts.
- Working in partnership with the Page County Tourism Council, County and town leaders and industry partners, develop a strategy that will promote and grow Visit Page County among local businesses and residents.
- Analyze and identify gaps to determine what Visit Page County should be promoting.

Platforms

SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Social platforms** – Launch a Visit Page County Facebook companion page to the primary Page County page. Establish an Instagram presence as a third primary channel, in addition to Facebook and YouTube. Establish secondary channels, including LinkedIn and Pinterest. Consider establishing a Twitter presence.
- **Strategy** – Focus on increasing audience and engagement and expanding audience reach through content creation and demographic targeting. Utilize supplemental advertising to reach and build new audiences. Build engagement and increase website visits through participation in VTC's Social Media Co-op.
- **Campaigns** – Continue and evolve #WHYPageCounty to engage both local residents and visitors. Debut new tourism-focused installments in monthly video series. Create photo opportunities by continuing monthly photo contests and encouraging visitors to share their adventures through #VisitPageCounty. Leverage User Generated Content (UGC) from visitors and influencers to inspire travel to Page County and feature new content.

WEBSITE

- **VisitPageCounty.org** – Continue to build new website to better target and serve audiences. Create and build site content, including videography, photography, blogs, itineraries and event and community calendars. Work with Simpleview in branding development, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategy and development execution and Customer Relations Management (CRM).
- **Simpleview SEO** – Leverage Google Ads to drive traffic to the website and establish keyword ownership in the region and state.
- **Virginia Tourism Corporation** – Establish co-op partnership in VTC's Industry Advertising Co-op Program for digital advertising, featured website placements and click-throughs.

THIRD-PARTY PLATFORMS

- **AirDNA** – Utilize the analytics platform to collect data and insights through Airbnb and Vrbo.
- **TripAdvisor** – Consider advertising partnership and co-op opportunities to leverage the top global travel website.

PRINT PRODUCTS

- **Page County Visitors Guide** – This new destination guide is geared toward leisure travelers but supports all markets as it will also be used by event-goers, wedding guests, meeting attendees and other travelers. The undated guide will feature QR codes, allowing updated information in live time.
- **Digital guides** – These new interactive and mobile-friendly guides will expand product reach and allow visitors to access content on any device.
- **Wedding guide** – Consider a new guide to highlight wedding and event venues in Page County, as well as vendors and excursion and outing ideas to help couples, wedding guests, event attendees and planners and professionals maximize their time in the Shenandoah Valley.

Content Creation & Development

- **Film/video** – Continue vendor partnerships with creative agencies to develop video content and create opportunities for content promotion.
- **Images** – Continue vendor partnerships to acquire new brand images and seasonal photography for campaigns. Capitalize on Staff skills to supplement images captured by a creative agency and to establish an Instagram presence and following and accompany blogs and itineraries.
- **Blogs** – Continue to produce monthly branded and product-focused blogs geared toward all target markets, including leisure, weddings, meetings, outdoor recreation and events. Consider companion blogs to tourism videos that expand upon events, excursions, attractions, local businesses and lodging locations featured in the short films.
- **Itineraries** – Develop curated itineraries that drive visitation and return trips for families, couples, professionals and creatives that highlight the variety Page County offers.
- **Newsletters** – Launch quarterly newsletters to visitors highlighting the season, fresh-air adventures, attractions and events to drive visitation and inspire returns to Page County.
- **Promotional items** – Identify and consider production of branded marketing items. Launch a \$5,000 vacation giveaway as a tool to extend sales and marketing efforts while capturing Page County-specific visitor analytics.

Advertising Partnerships

- **Shenandoah Valley Travel Association** – 2022 partnership in the **Shenandoah Valley E-mail Marketing Cooperative**. Through four deployments, the emails and ads will reach 1 million qualified households interested in visiting the Shenandoah Valley for vacation. **SVTA banner ad agreements for 2022-23** will reach targeted markets through placement on VisitShenandoah.org and VisitSkylineDrive.org.
- **Virginia Tourism Corp.** – Establish partnership to promote Page County through VTC's travel guide, digital ads on Virginia.org and social platforms.

Tactical Plan

As Page County's Economic Development and Tourism Department works to establish Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) status and oversee Page County's primary marketing efforts, this phased plan serves as an initial roadmap to guide and evolve marketing. The goal is to boost awareness, consideration and visitation for key audiences by promoting Page County as a whole. By promoting Page and the towns of Luray, Stanley and Shenandoah in strategic, cohesive branding, the ultimate goal is to establish Page County as a premier overnight destination that positions Page County to become as synonymous with the Shenandoah Valley as the Town of Luray is with the Luray Caverns.

Timeline: Work is currently underway, with the completion of the phased approach on track for the end of fiscal year 2023.



Phase I: Mitigation

Establish a Tourism Council (Completed)

The Page County Tourism Council consists of seven members representing each of the County's districts, as appointed by the Page County Board of Supervisors, and industry leaders. The Council is tasked with working with the Page County Economic Development and Tourism Department to help guide marketing efforts and Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) fund allocations on an annual and quarterly basis.

Hire office staff to support County tourism efforts (Completed)

Page County's Economic Development and Tourism Department includes three full-time positions: Director of Economic Development and Tourism, Communications and Marketing Coordinator and Economic Development and Tourism Specialist. The Department is additionally aided by a Grant and Finance Specialist as needed.

Fund annual staff and facility costs of the Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center (Ongoing)

It is the Page County Tourism Council's current request that since TOT funds will cover the cost for the Visitors Center that the Center allows all businesses that contribute to the County TOT Fund to advertise their business in the form of print and digital marketing at the Center and on the Chamber's website. Chamber funding will be evaluated on a fiscal year basis.

Earmark funding for the three towns (Ongoing)

Annual TOT allocations will be available for the towns of Luray, Stanley and Shenandoah to utilize in collaboration with the Page County Economic Development and Tourism Department.

Create a Marketing Leverage Program by utilizing TOT Funds (Completed)

Page County will establish a grant program to leverage existing TOT funds.

Establish advertising partnerships (Completed)

Partnerships include the Shenandoah Valley E-mail Marketing Cooperative and SVTA banner ad agreements for 2022-23 will reach targeted markets through placement on VisitShenandoah.org and VisitSkylineDrive.org.

Phase II: Development

Establish the Economic Development and Tourism Department as a Destination Marketing Organization (In Process)

Page County will work to attain DMO status to promote the area as an overnight destination.

Collaboratively work with the towns of Luray, Stanley and Shenandoah and local organizations to create a Comprehensive Marketing Plan (In Process)

Page County is working to create a marketing plan to guide efforts.

Collaborate with State officials to obtain a Tourism Zone designation

Page County will work to establish, by ordinance, a Tourism Zone, allowing tourism businesses to take advantage of local tax incentives and deductions not elsewhere available to tourism businesses, including lodging, dining, retail, meeting facilities, outdoor recreation areas, attractions and wedding and event venues.

Identify strategic placement for visitors centers and rest stops

Page County will identify areas with high visitor traffic, including Visitors Centers and Rest Stops, to distribute print materials and guides.

Tourism Staff to assist towns and partners with marketing creation and distribution

Page County Tourism Staff will assist the towns of Luray, Stanley and Shenandoah and industry partners with marketing efforts, including campaign creation and print distribution.

Identify travelers' demographics (In Process)

Page County will identify travelers' demographics specific to Page County through surveys, market research and third-party partnerships such as AirDNA.

Implement a new County event geared toward both locals and visitors (In Process)

Page County in partnership with the Page Valley Fair will launch a June wine and spirits festival to encourage overnight visitation and provide a themed experience for both locals and travelers. With a goal of growing the festival, the Taste of the Valley event will showcase local and regional talent, products and businesses and enable Staff to capture visitor information, including zip codes.

Launch new Visit Page County social platforms on Facebook and Instagram

Page County will launch new Visit Page County social media platforms. A Visit Page County Facebook page will enable Staff to establish a page separate from the County's government page for visitors and locals that highlights local and seasonal happenings, campaigns and promotions and other tourist-focused information. A Visit Page County Instagram page is aimed at engaging a younger demographic through curated images and videos and unique hashtags. Page County will consider additional platforms, including Twitter, LinkedIn and Pinterest.

Debut new tourism-focused installments in the #WHYPageCounty video series

Page County in collaboration with a creative agency will debut tourism installments of the ongoing #WHYPageCounty video series that leverage themed experiences and highlight industry partners to inspire overnight visitation.

Begin monthly blogs (In Process)

Page County, following monthly themes set by the Virginia Tourism Corporation, will showcase seasonal happenings, unique experiences and industry partners through monthly blogs.

Phase III: Deployment

Launch VisitPageCounty.org

Page County has partnered with Simpleview to launch VisitPageCounty.org, set to debut in January 2023. Services include launching a mobile-first website aimed at inspiring unforgettable experiences for both leisure and business travelers to Page County. The Simpleview CMS is a content management system designed specifically for the travel industry. Simpleview CRM will enable Page County to manage all aspects of our Shenandoah Valley destination, from meetings and event sales management to collaborating across departments.

Distribute Page County Visitors Guides

Page will establish a new Visitors Guide to Page County. The new non-dated guides in a brochure format will feature a QR code, allowing real-time updates about Page County events, lodging and adventure specials and other visitor-focused information.

Premiere digital guides

Page County will launch new interactive and mobile-friendly guides that will expand product reach and allow visitors to access content on any device.

Encourage growth for local attractions

Page County will work with industry leaders to grow local attractions and activities through strategic and research-led marketing efforts.

Incentivize more short-term rentals in underserved areas

Page County will work to incentivize short-term rentals in underserved areas through tax-based incentives such as a Tourism Zone, AirDNA data and industry partnerships.

Collaborate with the Page County Economic Development Authority to identify needed support businesses

Working with the local EDA, Page County will identify needed support businesses as the tourism industry continues to grow.



Visit
PAGE COUNTY

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